

Suffolk Life Will Pay

As was reported last week, Suffolk County Executive Peter Cohalan's office announced the special attorneys representing the county on Shoreham would no longer be permitted to discuss with the media anything about the Shoreham case. In doing so, Cohalan has very effectively cut off a valuable source of information which has enabled us to keep our readers abreast of the latest happenings of that matter.

According to Cohalan's chief deputy, John Gallagher, a primary reason for the gag order to the attorneys was the cost to the county of the time spent talking to the media. If a reporter called an attorney in Washington and spoke to the attorney for 15 minutes, Gallagher reasoned, it would cost the county \$50, which is apparently a significant amount because of the county's dismal financial state. Personally, we think Gallagher's statement is a crock, and that the real reason is that Cohalan and crew have made a conscious decision to put an embargo on news concerning the nuclear power plant. Just as they put a cone of silence over the talks about future rates Gallagher has been having with LILCO and its friends from Nassau, the state and business. If you can escape from the prying eyes of the press until you cut your deal, you have less to worry about. But if Cohalan, Gallagher and company think we're going to sit quietly back while silence prevails on such an important issue, they have gone crazy.

We offered Gallagher a solution this week: Suffolk Life offered to pay for any time we spend talking to the attorneys. We'll foot the bill, we told him, and the county won't have to pay, but the public will be kept informed. Gallagher promised he would explore that possibility, and would get back to us. He hasn't! Which is exactly why we will not accept being put into a position whereby Gallagher is the only source of whatever Shoreham information he may want to pass along. First, we will not accept such a news' management arrangement, and secondly, from past experience, Shoreham could be up and running long before he returns a phone call. Our offer still stands, John, we'll pay for the time we take. If you don't lift the gag order you'll have to come up with a better excuse. Why not try the truth this time?

I personally take this embargo as a personal affront. When Cohalan

called and asked if I would serve on the Shoreham Commission as the county's representative, I didn't hesitate to agree to do so because of the importance of the issue. I personally devoted hundreds of hours to this end, not only my own hours but hours of my staff who became involved in research and backup support. I never once asked for a penny of compensation, nor was I offered any. I never asked for reimbursement of travel costs and other expenses, which ended up costing me a couple of thousand dollars out of my own pocket. If I as a citizen of Suffolk County can make this kind of contribution to my county, I believe that Peter Cohalan and company owe it to the people to make sure the public has available to them every bit of news they deserve on this critical and important question.

Another Cohalan action comes as a double insult to those members of the Shoreham Commission who were advocates of the county's position. No one from Cohalan's camp contacted any of us to ask our opinion of Dr. Howard Axelrod, recently hired by the county, Nassau, and friends of LILCO, at a county cost of \$10,000. If Cohalan had bothered to do so, he might have learned something about Axelrod's ability to be "impartial" in that matter.

Axelrod was the representative of the Public Service Commission. Many of us felt that it was impossible for Axelrod to be unbiased or act in a totally non-vested manner during the hearings since he had spent the better part of his life in the P.S.C. and was of the mindset that had allowed the P.S.C. to ignore consideration of the impact of rates on the ratepayers.

Axelrod was quite flustered at one meeting when I questioned about the lack of concern for the ratepayers. He stated that, traditionally, the P.S.C. considered primarily the needs of the utilities and the impact on the financial community. I suggested to him that the P.S.C. was derelict in its duty, that its foremost obligation should be to the consumer.

To put it mildly, we are not at all happy with what appears to be Cohalan's crawling into bed with the friends of LILCO. Whether this is fact or perception we are not yet sure, but we warn the residents of Suffolk County to watch closely Cohalan and company's moves on a daily basis.

And why not?

ardent supporters, nothing could be further from the truth.

The tactics of this campaign are those of desperate people. At every step of the way, in the courts and now in a decision by a Nuclear Regulatory Commission's panel, LILCO has lost its desperate bid to foist its own version of an evacuation plan upon an area which cannot be safely evacuated. According to the NRC's own regulations, a workable evacu-

ation plan is necessary before a plant can be licensed. Unless the County of Suffolk -- which has declared a safe evacuation is not possible -- and the State of New York -- which agrees with the county -- cooperate in evacuation procedures, the plant cannot be legally licensed.

The evacuation issue remains as the primary issue in the continuing controversy known as Shoreham. As such, it is the focus of much attention and behind the scenes manipulations by those who are shoulder to shoulder allies with LILCO in efforts to put the plant on line without concern for the problems of evacuation or future health threats to the public.

A major effort in this regard is taking place in the Suffolk County Legislature, where a bill proposed by Presiding Officer Lou Howard -- an ardent LILCO supporter -- urges county participation in an evacuation plan. In recent weeks, Howard has attempted to sweeten the pot by vowing a tax break if Shoreham opens in the future, a promise that is the epitome of political rhetoric. Howard's bill is being held -- at Howard's request -- subject to call in the Finance Committee of the Legislature. Howard doesn't want the bill out on the floor of the legislature, where it is destined for defeat. He wants to give it the specter of life by keeping it in committee, at the same time waging a letter and phone campaign urging legislators to support the bill. He assumes -- perhaps wisely -- that some of the legislators will be swayed by political pressure and go along to get along. That promises of political favors in the future will cause them to abandon any concern for public safety.

Howard is reportedly being assisted in this scam by Suffolk Republican Leader Mike Blake who, say sources who wish to remain nameless for political survival, has ordered the GOP members of the Finance Committee to keep it bottled up there. The word is that three members of that committee are willing to vote the bill out so that the full legislature can pass judgement on it once and for all. But the key member, Finance Committee Chairman John Rosso, refuses to add his vote to make that possible. He insists that the rules of the legislature are such that in order to vote Howard's bill out of committee he would have to vote in favor of the bill. Since he does not believe evacuation is possible, he declares, he will not vote in favor of the bill.

We think he should reconsider. If

he continues in his present stance, he will be doing exactly what Mike Blake and Lou Howard want him to do, keep the bill bottled up to keep it alive, to give the impression there is hope the county may back off its refusal to participate in evacuation. We think it is crucial at this time for the legislators to face the issue. As noted, the courts and the NRC panel hearing the evacuation question have ruled LILCO cannot impose its own evacuation plan without county participation. If the legislators reject it, the issue should be put to rest once and for all. The long drawn out, and expensive, process should be over. And we can get on with the rest of our lives.

The Howard fiasco could be voted out of committee with the strong statement those who are voting in favor are doing so only to put the issue before the full legislature, where it belongs. The issue must be settled, and now. For a very good reason. The NRC commissioners have indicated they will rule on a recent ruling by an NRC appeals board which rejected a low power license for the plant. The minority of those commissioners have already shown themselves to be in favor of Shoreham, and will undoubtedly overturn the appeals board decision.

If that should occur, LILCO will undoubtedly move with all speed to begin low power tests, even with the future of the plant in grave doubt because of the evacuation issue. Such a happening would complicate the whole issue with further wasteful costs for decommissioning if, in the end, the courts rule -- as surely they must -- that the plant cannot be opened without an evacuation plan in place.

John Rosso is already saddled with political problems because of his switch on the Southwest Sewer District sales tax, an action which caused all Suffolk residents to bear the burden of bailing out the scandal-ridden sewer project. If he continues his current stance, following the orders of his political leader, he could well lose his last vestige of credibility.

John Rosso has, on many occasions, shown himself to be a capable, well meaning public official. He has the opportunity to do so again. He can play the Blake-Howard game or become a heavy hitter on the side of the public. The public should watch very carefully to see on which team Rosso belongs.

And why not?

It's Up To You, John

A LILCO-financed group known as "Citizens to Open Shoreham" has launched a media blitz designed to give the impression there is growing support for the opening of the Shoreham nuclear power plant. The effort is part of a last ditch effort by the utility and its supporters to deceive regulatory agencies into believing that the opposition to the plant is fading away. But, like much that is claimed by LILCO and its

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Do As We Say, Not As We Do

Anyone who has ever come to grips with regulations enforced by the New York State Department of Conservation has experienced a high level of frustration. Town officials dealing with the DEC in matters pertaining to landfills are at the top of the list. Most officials frequently complain that the DEC as a regulatory agency is strong on mandates regardless of the costs, but short on cooperating to bring about solutions to problems.

Experience shows, however, that the DEC is, itself, the cause of many problems which are left unsolved because of the lack of action by this state agency. A prime example is the recent discovery of a PCB dumpsite on the ground of the RCA property in Rocky Point, which is now owned by the State of New York.

As was exclusively reported in Suffolk Life last week by reporter Dan Aug, the PCB contamination results from leakage from transformers once utilized by RCA which operated on the site. That land was donated to the State of New York which, according to one DEC official, is now responsible for the cleanup of the problem.

An earlier cleanup had been initiated, with a mid-west firm hired to come in, clean up the site, and haul the PCB contaminated soil to a safe depository. Funds reportedly ran out while that cleanup was winding down, and the piles of contaminated soil, clothing worn by the cleanup workers and PCB contaminated cleaning liquid stored in 50 gallon drums remain on the site.

Brookhaven Town officials responded immediately when notified about the dump site, concerned enough to post a 24-hour guard to prevent anyone from coming into contact with the contaminated material. The Suffolk County Board of Health and District Attorney's office have also investigated and will continue to do so.

The attitude of the DEC, however, is something else. The matter is of "no great concern" to them, even

though one DEC official acknowledged that the readings of PCB contamination are much higher than acceptable federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines permit. Initially the DEC officials attempted to dismiss any concern because the contaminated materials are "far back" on the site. Now, however, based on recommendations from county health officials, the DEC has agreed to put into place about 400 feet of six-foot high fencing with barbed wire attached to the top.

There's something wrong with that solution. Why not just get rid of the contaminated material immediately? Why waste money putting up a fence when the only possible correct solution is the proper disposal of the material? Would the fence satisfy the DEC's enforcement demands if the property was privately owned? We think not! When the towns voice concerns about the problems associated with landfill sites, the DEC's usual proposed solution is to truck the garbage to another area. A prime example of "Do as we say, not as we do."

Brookhaven Town is currently suffering with two private landfill operations, as are the people who live near them. Those sites are operating in violation of town regulations which declare they must have special town permits. They don't, because the state DEC issued a license despite the fact local regulations were not adhered to. A simple cooperative effort whereby no state permit would be issued unless all regulations were met would solve such problems. But that solution is too simple for DEC officials to be able to grasp. Instead, they issue permits, permit the landfills to operate even after the permits expire, and then go through long administrative proceedings when violations of their own regulations occur. A complete waste of time and money that could be avoided through cooperative action with the town.

One of the frequently voiced excuses heard from DEC officials is

they don't have enough enforcement people to do the job. What is needed more than money to pay for more people, however, is the application of common sense in the administration of the agency.

It's time, we think, for our legislators to demand a thorough study of the operation of the DEC, with a view toward eliminating the problems that currently exist. It's time the DEC becomes a state agency work-

ing in cooperation and harmony with local levels of government, with a true concern for the safety of the public as opposed to bureaucratic bumbling. A good start would be to live up to their responsibility and rid the Rocky Point state-owned site of the PCB contaminants without any further delay. Which is what they should have done long ago.

And why not?

Conservatives Get Smart

After years of floundering as a political sham, it appears that the Conservative Party in Suffolk County has finally gained some backbone and is getting smart politically.

For the last several years, they have sold the integrity and principles of the Conservative Party to the Republican Party for a few piddling jobs and some pseudo importance. Lock, stock and barrel they have endorsed Republican candidates regardless of their political philosophy. Some candidates, although Republican, were Liberal in philosophy. Others had either voted or publically professed viewpoints that were alien to the Conservative philosophy, yet, they ran with Conservative endorsement.

The county Conservatives announced last week that under no circumstances would a Republican be given the Conservative endorsement unless they signed a pledge to allow the voters of Suffolk County to choose their form of legislative government in an open and free election. This has been the long-time aim of many citizens from throughout the

county. It has been a belief affirmed by the Conservative party for years. We commend the leadership of the Conservative party for taking this stand.

The right to choose the type of government you wish to be represented by is a basic tenant and principle of our constitution. This right has been thwarted by the sitting legislators who, in effect, have said, "We know what is good for us, the legislators, and we are not going to let you citizens choose what is best for you."

We hope that the leadership of the Conservative party stands fast and refuses to give in to power plays which will surely come down from Michael Blake and crowd at the Republican headquarters. This stance that the Conservative party has taken on this issue can either be the renewal of the Conservative party as a party of principle, or the elimination of any credibility that the party hopes to have in the future.

Hold tight, or die.

And why not?

Stop The Salt Water License

The D.E.C. has proposed, in a package of bills submitted to the legislature, a salt water fishing license. This is nothing more than a blatant attempt to legislate a new tax on one of the few free recreational pursuits enjoyed by millions.

The D.E.C., which has proposed this measure, is the same organization that says it does not have the manpower or the money to enforce the protection of the environment currently under their jurisdiction.

The D.E.C. is probably the worst of the bureaucracies in the State of New York. It has enormous power and responsibility, yet lacks the leadership and thus the organization to do the job it has been empowered to undertake. Instead of cleaning up their own house, it seeks to extend their sphere of influence, control and interference in the everyday life of citizens enjoying a relaxing fishing trip.

The reason why salt water fishing has never been licensed is quite simple and based upon common sense. Most species of salt water fish do not spend their whole life here within the confines of the state's waters. They are migratory, spend-

ing only a short time of their life span in the great state of New York. If licensing is necessary for either control or development of salt water fisheries, it should be done by the federal government. Both fish and boatmen can be in one moment in New York State waters, in another in New Jersey, Rhode Island or Connecticut. Where does the licensing begin and end?

We have learned of some of the rules and regulations they intend to put into effect. They are cumbersome, costly and unenforceable. They will make dishonest sportsmen out of every fisherman.

The D.E.C.'s proposal is a sham to raise additional tax dollars without providing a single benefit for either the fishery or the fishing people.

We hope that the downstate legislators, for once in their lives, get their act together and oppose these measures unanimously. In fact, not only oppose them, but lobby as a group against them.

We urge every one of our readers who has ever picked up a fishing pole for snapper or billfish to contact your state legislator today, opposing the licensing of salt water fishing.

And why not?

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What If?

Suffolk County government is facing a financial crisis. This past week County Comptroller Joseph Caputo recommended that the county halt all plans for capital construction, indicating that if the county continues spending as it has, sales taxes will have to be raised by three-quarters of a cent and land-owners might see real estate taxes skyrocketing by 75 per cent.

The county legislature and the county executive blame this financial predicament on the Long Island Lighting Company for not paying taxes on the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant. This allegation is neither true nor the true culprit behind the county's fiscal dilemma.

What has brought us to this red letter fiscal day in Suffolk County's history is mismanagement and spending by the politicians, wasteful spending, beyond the taxpayers ability to fund.

Cohalan was given a mandate during his first election as county executive to pare down, clean out and eliminate duplication of government. Those of us who believed in him expected that he would have been as good a county executive as he had been supervisor of Islip Town. For whatever reasons, better known to Cohalan, he failed as a manager. It became obvious during the early days of his administration that he either had no intention of living up to his campaign promises, or lacked the ability to do so.

He could not gain the respect of the legislature and they refused to pass the cost-cutting measures he recommended. In fact, the legislature went on a spending binge, introducing and passing a whole host of costly projects not particularly designed to do the public much good, designed more to make the politicians look good in the public's eyes. The budget for the legislature alone has skyrocketed in recent years.

The greatest blunder was the way Cohalan and the legislature handled negotiations with county employees. Huge salary increases

were granted to the C.S.E.A. workers, sheriffs and police. In some cases these increases exceeded 70 per cent. On the average they were 42 per cent. Midway through negotiations, Cohalan publically and privately stated that any settlement above 24 per cent would cause financial problems in the future.

Bill Brotherton, Cohalan's fiscal advisor, presented in detail the impact a settlement above the 24 per cent level would have. It was disastrous, and it is now the disaster that they knew would happen. To blame the county's financial problems on the lack of the LILCO taxes from Shoreham is a cheap political cop-out. Cohalan knew full well that these taxes would come to an end if the plant did not open. Cohalan was also very much aware of the fact the taxes that LILCO paid were nothing more than transfer payments, that the ratepayers were ultimately paying anyway through their rates. What difference does it make if we pay taxes through our rates to LILCO, or pay taxes directly to the government?

What if the plant had never been built? Would they have spent less? If so, why did they spend the windfall funds that could have been utilized as a taxcutting savings for the taxpayers. Or why didn't they utilize the funds for capitol improvement projects, such as the grandiose plan for an extravagant court complex in western Suffolk, a court complex designed only to cut travel time for the judges and attorneys who don't want to travel to Riverhead.

Windfall taxes, such as those that come from Shoreham-type projects, are used by politicians to cover up their wasteful spending habits. They provide the bucks to load up the payroll for political reasons; the dollars for huge pay increases for politicians; the pork barrel projects that give politicians a reason to go back to their constituents and say: "See what we got for you?"

Well-administered local governments learned a long time ago that

revenue sharing funds passed down from the state and federal levels could be a time bomb for those governments who applied them to their operating budgets. They constantly faced the threat of these funds being eliminated, and then would have to face cutting services or would have to impose huge tax increases. The smarter officials used these funds for improvement projects, not for police and employee salaries or normal operating costs. If the funds were wiped out, the projects were cancelled, but the public didn't get belted with bigger tax bills.

Suffolk County, Brookhaven Town and the Shoreham-Wading River School District got caught in this trap. They went on spending sprees, raised salaries, increased patronage positions, and approved higher budgets each year. But with the

offsetting windfall taxes, the public hardly noticed, since the tax rates were kept down by the extra income. But now all three are facing the problems brought on by their own poor administrative habits. Now they're crying about lost taxes, because now the public will see, first hand, how bad the spending habits were. All three will blame their financial dilemma on the lost taxes, and those who oppose Shoreham, when the blame rests squarely on their own shoulders.

The chickens are coming home to roost. Cohalan and the county legislature must now pay for the inefficient management and make the hard decisions they have refused to make in the past. The full scope of their greedy spending habits will now, at long last, come into full public view.

And why not?

More Marinas Needed

Boating and related industries are one of the fastest growing segments of our economy here on Long Island.

Most of us live on Long Island because of its proximity to water. Most people either have a boat or, someday, hope to own one. It's almost guaranteed once you have a boat you will buy many more, moving up in size each step of the way. Once you get past the trail boat size, you need a slip or a mooring to keep your boat at. Most of us do not have the luxury of a slip in our backyard, so therefore, we are forced to go to a commercial marina.

Almost every marina we know of in a decent location is booked solid. One marina we are familiar with, Jackson's in Hampton Bays, has a waiting list of over 80 boat owners for this coming season.

The Jacksons have been pursuing an expansion of their marina for over four years. Their plans have met with environmental approval, have been soundly thought out and yet, they have not been allowed to start construction. Two major groups have been thwarting his intentions. The town trustees, who are mostly baymen, consider the bay their private domain. They want no further development of marinas that will bring with it additional traffic on the bays. Some environmental groups, notably, the Group for the South Fork, are opposed to changes. Years ago, we used to call people who are of this mind-set 'againers.' They were against anything that re-

sembled progress or development.

Marinas themselves are big business. They provide direct, substantial employment but, more important, the people who use marinas add substantially to the economy. It has been estimated that boat owners who own boats over 24 feet spend an average of \$5,000 per year on food, lodging, provisions, fuel, insurance and berthing costs. It's pretty much accepted as a rule of thumb that this expenditure goes up at the rate of \$200 per foot. When you apply your normal economic expanders, these figures are enlarged six times within the economy. This means megabucks to a community such as Hampton Bays that has no other industry besides the resort business to draw upon.

When the need for slips cannot be filled, boat owners are forced to go elsewhere or get out of boating. The money they would have spent is spent elsewhere. Those who say "no more marinas" are saying no more economic development for the community." Ironically, these people already have their own niche cut, or have moved out here with their wealth intact.

Marinas, when properly designed, are good neighbors. They do draw a good element of people who cause little commotion or confusion. We feel that those who are blocking the development of new marinas should take their heads out of the sand and stop their needless obstruction.

And why not?

Isn't Current History Important?

For a long time I have been on a kick over the fact that almost no time or instruction is given to current history in our school systems. Years of a child's life is spent learning geography, foreign countries, foreign governments and history about the years prior to World War I. Little time is devoted to teaching our students about our current govern-

ment and about history between the end of the first World War and today. We feel that this period of time is probably the most important period we have gone through during the past 2000 years. More has happened and more has changed during the last 40 years than took place during the first 1900s.

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Willmotts and Why-Nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

Cont. from page 3

Just think back about the changes that we have experienced because of electrification and transportation. Think about the changes in the structure of our government between the first World War and today. It's frightening to think that kids are leaving our schools without even the scantest knowledge about this period.

This has been brought home vividly to me in dealings with my own children. It was reinforced the other night when my daughter, who is a

sophomore, told me that she knew nothing about the Korean or Vietnam Wars.

If you feel as I do that this period of history is important for our children to know, please join me in requesting your local school board make it mandatory that courses are given covering this period of time. Also, write to the Commissioner of Education in Albany, requesting that curriculum be developed covering this period.

And why not?



CITIZENSHIP AWARD—Soroptimist International of Suffolk made its annual Youth Citizenship Award and Training Award at a recent dinner meeting. Pictured from left, are Soroptimist President Ruth Kreamer, Charter Marie Giuri, YCA winner Randy Glenn Garland, of Centereach High School, and E. Gail Williams, of Brookhaven National Laboratory, who was guest speaker. Each winner received a \$500 United States Savings Bond. In each contest, the local winner is eligible to compete for larger awards in the regional competitions.



MONSIGNOR JOHN FAGAN with several of his young friends

For over half a century Little Flower Children's Services has been caring for children who have lost their most precious possession—their family. During these years, Suffolk County has been our home—its people our support—

We therefore cordially invite you to join us in...

*Little Flower's 55th Anniversary Celebration
"A Salute to Suffolk County"*



honoring
Peter F. Cochran
Suffolk County Executive
for the benefit of
Little Flower Children's Services of New York
on
Friday, May 17, 1985 7-10 p.m.
Buffet Dinner - Wine - Dancing
at
Colonie Hill
1717 Motor Parkway
Hempstead, New York



ALL MY CHILDREN'S "ERICA" SUSAN LUCCI will be on hand to greet you on behalf of Little Flower's Children



WALK'S BOB KLEIN will act as Master of Ceremonies

HONORARY COMMITTEE

Henrietta Acampora
Gregory J. Blass
Joseph R. Caputo
William Carney

Judith Hope
Joseph F. Janoski
Juliette A. Kinsella
Martin Lang

Kenneth P. LaValle
Michael A. LoGrande
Francis J. Murphy
Anthony Noto

John J. O'Neil
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David J. Willmott

THE PHILOSOPHY of Little Flower is that children grow best in families, and that is what Little Flower is all about—finding families for children who have lost theirs. The children who are sent to us have been separated from their parents by illness, poverty, death or some other tragedy of our society. Our primary goal is to reunite the child with his own family, but if that is not possible, we try to find him a new family by Adoption. As we begin our 55th year, there are over 1,200 children in our care.

- RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER
- FOSTER HOMES
- GROUP HOMES
- ADOPTION SERVICES
- INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY AT WADING RIVER EXCLUSIVELY FOR HANDICAPPED RESIDENTS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY

Yes, I would like to join Little Flower's salute to Suffolk County, and attend your 55th Anniversary Dinner. Please make _____ reservation(s). Donation is \$50.00 per person.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

Please make check payable to
Little Flower Children's Services of N.Y.
All donations are tax exempt.

Please Mail to:
Mrs. Adrienne Carr, Director
Development Office
Little Flower Children's Services
Wading River, N.Y. 11792

This Ad appears through the generosity of one of Little Flower's Benefactors.

College holds ground breaking

Long Island University broke ground for two new buildings at its Southampton Campus on May 6. The new structures, which will house marine science teaching laboratories and painting and photography studios, are expected to be constructed by early next fall. They were designed by T.E. Bindrim of Melville.

The marine science laboratory, a 2400 square-foot

addition to the existing Marine Science Station will include instructional facilities for the study of ichthyology, physiology, the biology of plankton, marine ecology, aquaculture, limnology, field biology and ecology. The new fine arts building will include studio space for painting and drawing, as well as a photo studio and dark room.



TAKING TIME OUT during a wheelchair soccer game with the Hartford Chargers is Francisco Marmol of the Suffolk Seagulls. He is flanked by teacher aides Eleonora Taliereciro, left, and Gayle Pike. Donations are needed to send these players to Michigan to compete in national competition. (62-L)

Conversation With The County Executive

Last Thursday I met with Peter Cohalan, Suffolk County Executive. We had what might be described as a man-to-man talk, kind of down and dirty with no holds barred.

Pete and I go back some time. I admired Pete and the job he did as supervisor of Islip. I personally sought him out and encouraged him to run for county executive. I was very involved in his campaign, and very pleased by the margin of his victory both in the primary and the general election. The plurality by which he won gave him a clear cut mandate from the people. They wanted leadership and integrity, strong management, the elimination of duplication, waste and inefficient programs that did not serve the majority, but only served special interests. They wanted the South West Sewer District mess cleaned up once and for all. They wanted a cap put on expenses and tax increases eliminated.

Cohalan came into office with a vengeance. He was determined to do what the people had ordered. During his tenure as county executive, the Shoreham issue emerged as one of the most crucial he would face. Going into office he was dubious of LILCO, but was not outwardly opposed to the company or the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant.

During his first term, Cohalan ordered an evacuation plan developed that would meet the criteria of the federal government, allowing LILCO to open the plant. In the process of developing this plan, the various consultants presented Cohalan with hard data and facts that indicated that an evacuation plan could not be developed that would get all the people safely off Long Island in case of an emergency. During the same period, pro-safety people who were interested in the Shoreham plant and concerned about these safety factors brought to the public's attention some of the design faults and questionable construction.

To quiet these pro-safety people, Cohalan entered into negotiations with the Long Island Lighting Company for a truthful and complete evaluation of the design, the systems and the construction by an independent, outside consulting firm. When he insisted that certain systems in the Shoreham plant be included in the study, LILCO balked. They wanted a study jointly done between the corporation and the county, but only on certain portions of the project and under certain conditions. Cohalan had been informed by his own staff that there were certain alleged deficiencies that had to be addressed if the County was to insure residents that the plant was safe. LILCO said no to this inspection. Cohalan said no

to a whitewash by LILCO and, as a result, no independent county-authorized survey was performed and relations between the county and LILCO broke down.

Cohalan subsequently took the position of the pro-safety people. He earned the wrath of the Long Island Lighting Company, their related companies, the financial community and a whole host of political opportunists. The county, through the courts, has been victorious. Just when it appeared the battle was almost won because of court decisions favoring the County's position on evacuation, safety and economics, Cohalan publically appeared to be changing his mind and weakening his stance.

Frank Jones, his deputy, had been the tough Shoreham expert. All of a sudden Jones was removed from this sphere of influence. It was acknowledged that Cohalan was talking with the president of LILCO and Nassau County Executive Purcell to mutually find a way to bail out LILCO. The most recent change in Cohalan's attitude was the gag he placed on the law firm which has been representing the county. Henceforth, they would not be allowed to talk to journalists. The reason given by Cohalan was the financial condition of the County due to LILCO not paying their taxes.

Suffolk Life has been deeply involved in the Shoreham issue and felt that our readers deserved to have every bit of information available. We offered to pay the county or the attorneys for whatever charges the attorneys might develop from talking with us. We asked that the same privilege be extended to all other journalists. We were denied this request. Cohalan said that this would not be fair. My answer to him was, "Hogwash. The gag is nothing more than plain and simple news management, the same game that LILCO has been playing. It's not becoming of you as a man, a politician or a government official."

In our conversation, Cohalan said, "My position has not changed, I still fear for the safety of the people. The financial pressures that are being placed upon the county is making me walk a very tight rope."

"LILCO is withholding \$130 million in taxes on the Shoreham plant. This is approximately 13% of the County budget, or 26% of the non-mandated portion we have under our control. I am faced with cutting every department by at least 20% or a substantial increase in real estate taxes or an increase in the sales tax," he said.

I reminded Cohalan that his first obligation is to protect the safety, health and welfare of the people of

this County. That this is his first and foremost responsibility. It is his constitutional responsibility. The conditions that brought him to his decision to oppose Shoreham had not changed. The location of the plant is still on top of a running artesian well. The quality of construction is still in question. The design of the systems has proven time and time again to be faulty. The management of LILCO has shown no more care or concern about the safety of the plant than they have in the past. There is no more possibility, in fact, less possibility of getting everyone out of the area when and if an accident happens. We have not developed any instantaneous means of transporting people that were not there prior to his decision. In fact, that are more people in close proximity to the plant and east of it than there ever were.

Cohalan said that I did not understand the financial ramifications. I respectfully disagreed with him. I suggested that he do what he had the mandate to do when he went into office six years ago: eliminate the duplication, the waste and the inefficiencies of county government and the catering of special interests. He said he had tried, but the county legislature continually overrode him and, because of the lack of accountability, they restored programs and personnel he had eliminated to contain costs.

I suggested to Cohalan that the real estate taxes paid by LILCO are nothing more than transfer payments taken out of the same pocket-books. Almost all taxpayers who live on Long Island are also ratepayers. Does it make any difference whether we pay these monies to LILCO or we pay these in taxes directly to the county, the towns and the school districts? Of course, the answer is there is no difference except that it looks like LILCO is the bad guy rather than the municipalities.

I reminded Cohalan that if LILCO fails to pay their taxes for three years, the county will assume ownership of the plant and the land. With this being the legal fact, doesn't it make sense, then, for the county to borrow the money from the financial

institutions and either recover it from LILCO when they redeem their facility by paying the delinquent taxes which they would have to pay interest and late charges on, or to sell off the land and the property and recover the money for the county that way? Cohalan said, "This is what we have been doing. We now face another dilemma which has led to my soul searching. The financial interests are about ready to drop our credit rating down. This will mean that certain avenues for financing will become closed or even more expensive." I asked him why he felt that the county's credit was being down-rated so drastically based upon what is obviously a temporary situation? He said he felt LILCO was putting pressure on the financial institutions to down-grade the county's credit to force them to accept the opening of the plant. My reaction was, "This sounds like out and out blackmail, the trading of the lives of Suffolk residents for the financial interests of the mismanaged corporation."

Cohalan said that the county was desperately seeking out all avenues to overcome this scenario. I saw a worried, concerned and tired man, but I reminded him that the decision he had to weigh in his own mind was: are there ever such extenuating financial circumstances that you would trade off the solving of them by foresaking human lives?

This is a tough decision for a county executive who is responsible for the financial stability of the county. For a man of lesser quality, the financial interests would be paramount. For a man who comes from a family who has had five generations of public service, it should be a much more difficult decision to make for the outcome of the decision will be irrevocable. Does the man have the character, the strength, the wisdom and the guidance of God to make the decision in favor of the people, or does he cave in, give up and turn his back on those he was pledged to serve? Will five generations of public service end in disgrace? Time will tell.

And why not?

Why not let Cohalan know how you feel. Send a letter, or at least drop him this message:

Pete, we pray you make your decision based upon our health and welfare and not the financial best interest of LILCO.

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Send to: County Executive, County Center, Hauppauge.